United Nations A/65/PV.76

General Assembly

Official Records

Sixty-fifth session

76th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 1 March 2011, 15 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Deiss ..... (Switzerland)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 133 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/65/691/Add.2, A/65/691/Add.3, A/65/691/Add.4, A/65/691/Add.5 and A/65/691/Add.6)

The President (*spoke in French*): In keeping with established practice, I should like to draw the attention of the General Assembly to documents A/65/691/Add.2, A/65/691/Add.3, A/65/691/Add.4, A/65/691/Add.5 and A/65/691/Add.6, in which the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communication contained in document A/65/691/Add.1, Nepal, Palau, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tonga have made the necessary payments to reduce their arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in those documents?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 117 (*continued*)

Implementation of the resolutions of the United Nations

Draft resolution (A/65/L.60)

The President (*spoke in French*): Members will recall that the General Assembly considered this item, in a joint debate with agenda item 118 on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, at its 56th plenary meeting, on 6 December 2010.

Members will also recall that at the 72nd plenary meeting of its sixtieth session, held on 15 March 2006, the General Assembly adopted resolution 60/251, by which it established the Human Rights Council as a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly. Paragraph 8 of resolution 60/251 provides that:

> "the General Assembly, by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting, may suspend the rights of membership in the [Human Rights] Council of a member of the Council".

We are gathered this afternoon to consider a serious matter. Several members of the General Assembly have introduced draft resolution A/65/L.60, proposing, owing to the human rights situation in Libya, the suspension of that country's rights of membership in the Human Rights Council. We also take note of the recommendation made in that regard by the Human Rights Council at its special session on 25 February on Libya.

The events that have been shaking the Arab world for several weeks remind us that there can be neither security nor development unless human rights are respected. The credibility of the international community, the General Assembly, the Security

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Council and the Human Rights Council is at stake in ensuring that such rights are respected and their violations punished.

Yesterday, Monday, 28 February, I addressed the Human Rights Council at the opening of its sixteenth session. There, I recalled the importance of a strong Council, whose members are committed to strengthening the protection and promotion of human rights by virtue of example, by upholding the highest standards and by prohibiting double standards.

The fact that the Council held an emergency special session on Libya last Friday and adopted by consensus resolution S-15/1 on the human rights situation in that country sends an important signal. The situation in Libya is deeply disturbing. Failure to consider that issue would have entailed a considerable loss of credibility for the United Nations and the Human Rights Council.

Today, it is up to us, the General Assembly, to do our part. We must show unity and resolve in our determination to uphold the fundamental values of the Charter. That is our duty to all men and women who hope and struggle to have their rights respected and who today run the greatest risks. Their aspirations must not be dashed. I trust that our debate this afternoon will reflect that imperative and that we will prove that the General Assembly is a strong instrument in the service of peace, security and prosperity.

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

The Secretary-General: I welcome this opportunity to brief the General Assembly on the latest developments in Libya. We meet today to consider a crisis marked by ongoing violence, amid a growing humanitarian emergency and a political situation that could quickly deteriorate further.

Meeting in emergency session over the weekend, the Security Council acted with unanimity and decisiveness. I also welcome the strong statements of many international leaders and organizations, including the League of Arab States, the African Union, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the European Union. The world has spoken with one voice. We demand an immediate end to the violence against civilians and full respect for their fundamental human rights, including those of peaceful assembly and free speech.

I welcome, too, the recommendation of the Human Rights Council to suspend Libya's membership as long as the violence continues. I fully support the Council's decision to urgently dispatch an independent international commission of inquiry to investigate alleged violations of international human rights in Libya. In that spirit, I also commend the Security Council's decision to refer the situation in Libya to the International Criminal Court.

Together, those actions send a strong and important message, of great consequence within the region and beyond, that there is no impunity, that those who commit crimes against humanity will be punished, and that the fundamental principles of justice and accountability shall prevail. Today, I urge the General Assembly to act decisively, as well.

The latest reports from the ground are sobering. I am gravely concerned about the continued loss of life, the ongoing repression of the population and the clear incitement to violence against the civilian population by Colonel Al-Qadhafi and his supporters. Arms depots and arsenals have reportedly been opened to gangs, which are terrorizing communities. There are reports that Government forces have fired indiscriminately on peaceful protesters and bombed military bases in the east of the country. In the west, there are reports of ongoing and serious clashes between Government forces and armed opponents.

The death toll from nearly two weeks of violence is unknown, but is likely to exceed 1,000, as I reported to the Security Council on Friday (see S/PV.6490). Thousands have been injured. Credible and consistent reports include allegations of extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests, detention and torture.

While more members of the military are reportedly abandoning the regime and joining the demonstrations, Colonel Al-Qadhafi and his supporters appear to have a tight grip on western parts of the country, chiefly in Tripoli and neighbouring areas. According to some accounts, the Government is also deploying forces along the Tunisian border. Armed protesters have taken control of several cities near Tripoli, including Zawiyah and Misratah.

However, violent clashes are reported in and around Zawiyah, where Libyan tanks and armoured cars attempting to break into the city have been repelled by opposition fighters. Government forces are reportedly mounting or preparing attacks on Misratah.

Opposition forces in the east appear to be organizing themselves for possible attacks. In the eastern city of Benghazi, a transitional national council has been established, led by the former Justice Minister.

There are serious indications of a growing crisis of refugees and displaced persons. The violence could disrupt distribution networks and lead to food shortages. The main humanitarian concerns at the moment relate to the west of the country, where access and information are extremely limited. Civilians continue to flee. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is present at the Tunisian and Egyptian borders, where more than 110,000 people have crossed so far and thousands more arrive by the hour.

UNHCR is particularly concerned that thousands of refugees and other foreigners may be trapped in Libya. In addition, the International Organization for Migration estimates that there are 1.5 million irregular migrant workers in the country, mostly from Africa and Asia. Significant efforts are under way to facilitate the return of those stranded migrants to their home countries. UNHCR has appealed to all neighbouring Governments in North Africa and Europe to maintain open land, air and sea borders for people fleeing the country. As I told the Security Council last week, it is essential that all those seeking to leave Libya be allowed to do so, without discrimination and irrespective of their nationality.

All international United Nations staff were evacuated two days ago. Our operations will continue from a secondary location, posing a major challenge to the coordination of international humanitarian assistance. In these difficult and unpredictable circumstances, it is critical that the international community remain united. In Washington, D.C., yesterday, I held in-depth consultations with President Obama of the United States and will have similar conversations with other world and regional leaders over the coming days.

Our collective challenge will be to provide real protection for the people of Libya — first, to halt the violence and, second, to deal with the growing humanitarian emergency. The arms embargo, travel ban and assets freeze imposed by Security Council resolution 1970 (2011) must be swiftly and effectively enforced. We need concrete action on the ground to provide humanitarian and medical assistance. Time is of the essence. Thousands of lives are at stake.

In the days ahead, United Nations assessment teams will deploy to organize our humanitarian response, working on the ground where they can in the eastern and western regions of Libya. In the coming days, I will also bring together the heads of United Nations humanitarian agencies and programmes, as well as other international and regional groups, including in particular the League of Arab States, the African Union and the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

As I have said, our most immediate priority must be providing urgent humanitarian relief — food, water, sanitation and shelter — to the thousands on both sides of the Tunisian and Egyptian borders. We must also find ways to expedite the return home of the many guest workers and foreign nationals who find themselves stranded and vulnerable. Within the week, I am planning to appoint a special envoy, who will work closely with regional Governments and the international community to coordinate our rapid and effective response.

From the beginning of the crisis, I have called on the Libyan leadership to hear and heed our strong collective call to end the violence and to respect the human rights and the legitimate aspirations of the Libyan people. The transition to a new democratic system of governance should start now.

The winds of change are sweeping the Middle East and North Africa. From Tunisia to Egypt, Bahrain to Yemen and beyond, the region's people are demanding new rights and new freedoms. The international community must stand firm. The United Nations Charter is very clear; it is our collective duty to stand for human rights, social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.

Equally important is the fact that for much of their history the societies of this region have been victims of outside interference in their daily lives and cultures. Today, as they strive to create a new future, it is imperative that the international community recognize that change must come from within. Above all, that means local ownership and local leadership, consistent with popular aspirations for dignity and justice.

In that great and noble quest, the United Nations stands ready to assist in every way possible should the people of the region and their Governments request our help. Beyond immediate humanitarian needs, that assistance could take many forms, from technical support in organizing elections to drafting new constitutions. And let us remember that, ultimately, the answer to many of the region's most pressing challenges is economic and social development. That is where the United Nations and its international partners can help most of all — in education, women's empowerment, social and economic advancement, job creation and youth opportunities.

My Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Pascoe, was in Egypt last weekend and conveyed that message to the authorities and the various stakeholders with whom he met. The same is true in Tunisia, to which I have sent a mission this week to explore the possible assistance that the United Nations could provide. In my talks with the region's leaders in every country, I have consistently urged restraint, open and inclusive dialogue and, above all, respect for the people's aspirations in their fullest expression.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

The Assembly has before it a draft resolution entitled "Suspension of the rights of membership of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in the Human Rights Council", issued as document A/65/L.60.

I give the floor to the representative of Lebanon to introduce draft resolution A/65/L.60.

Mr. Salam (Lebanon): It is an honour to address the General Assembly today under agenda item 117 and to introduce, on behalf of a number of Arab and African States, draft resolution A/65/L.60, entitled "Suspension of the rights of membership of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in the Human Rights Council".

Time is of the essence today, as demonstrated by the extensive violence and killings endured by the Libyan people over the past few weeks, which we have all been keenly following. Regional organizations took action last week, setting the stage for the initiative put before the Assembly today. On 22 February, the Council of the League of Arab States issued a statement condemning the crimes perpetrated against peaceful demonstrators. The African Union also issued a statement, on 23 February, condemning the arbitrary and excessive violence used against the Libyan people.

However, the condemnation has all but been confined to regional actors. The Human Rights Council last week adopted resolution A/HRC/S-15/2, recommending that the General Assembly suspend the rights of membership of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in that Council. The Security Council also unanimously adopted resolution 1970 (2011) on Saturday to help put an end to the crimes being committed in Libya as we speak. Draft resolution A/65/L.60 was introduced by Botswana, Gabon, Jordan, Lebanon, Nigeria and Qatar. It is our hope that it will empower the General Assembly to pursue an immediate halt to the suffering of our Libyan brothers.

We have been in constant touch with our fellow delegations to share the nature of the draft resolution and its objectives. The draft resolution is in essence of a procedural nature and is in line with the recommendation of the Human Rights Council pursuant to paragraph 8 of resolution 60/251 of 2006. The countries that presented the draft resolution underline that the proposed suspension is an exceptional and temporary procedure. To that end, paragraph 2 includes a mechanism to review the proposed suspension, as appropriate and in due time, which we hope will be very soon.

Let us now rise to the hopes and aspirations of the Libyan people by adopting the draft resolution by consensus, hopefully today. Finally, allow me to address a message of solidarity and deep respect to the courageous Libyan people. We extend our sincerest condolences to the families of the fallen.

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/65/L.60.

Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote before the voting, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Soborun (Mauritius): I am making this statement on behalf of the African Group to express our deep concern about the current situation in Libya and our support for draft resolution A/65/L.60.

In that regard, we recall the communiqué issued following the 261st meeting of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, held on 23 February, in

which the Council strongly condemned the indiscriminate and excessive use of force and lethal weapons against peaceful protestors, in violation of human rights and international humanitarian law, which continues to contribute to the loss of human life and the destruction of property. The African Union Peace and Security Council further underscored that the aspirations of the people of Libya for democracy, political reform, justice and socio-economic development were legitimate and urged that they be respected.

The African Group at the Human Rights Council supported the adoption, on 25 February, of resolution A/HRC/S-15/2 on the situation of human rights in Libya in the conviction that the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and freedom of association were provided for both in articles 19, 21 and 22 of the United Nations Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and in articles 9, 10 and 11 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, adopted in 1981.

The international community must send a strong message to those who are responsible for violence against the Libyan people and to the people of Libya, who are expressing their legitimate aspirations, that it is not indifferent to gross and systematic violations of human rights and that it respects the right of peaceful demonstrators to express their legitimate aspirations.

Each Member State has a duty to protect and safeguard all universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms, but members of the Human Rights Council have a particular duty to act on behalf of the international community in ensuring the promotion and protection of human rights. Consequently, the African Group, while joining in the consensus on the draft resolution, stresses that the decision taken with respect to the exceptional circumstances in Libya does not call into question the sovereign right of States elected to the various organs of the United Nations to fulfil their mandate.

The African Group supports the call of the Security Council on Member States, working together and acting in cooperation with the Secretary-General, to facilitate and sustain the return of humanitarian agencies and make available humanitarian and related assistance in Libya. At this time, our main concern is the safety and well-being of the people of Libya and foreign nationals in the country. Our hope is that the strong resolve of the international community will persuade the Libyan authorities to act with the utmost restraint and respect all universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms. We are also hopeful that the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council will keep the situation in Libya under review and will reconsider their decisions in the light of developing circumstances.

I wish to conclude by concurring with the statement made on behalf of the African Group at the Human Rights Council meeting on 25 February:

> "[J]ust as the international community remained united in its condemnation of the human rights situation in Libya, so also must it unite in helping Libya surmount its challenges."

The President (*spoke in French*): We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote before the voting.

I now give the floor to the representative of Gabon on a point of order.

Mrs. Bibalou (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): Gabon respects universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms. Gabon associates itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Mauritius on behalf of the African Union. My country supports draft resolution A/65/L.60, but is not a sponsor.

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/65/L.60, entitled "Suspension of the rights of membership of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in the Human Rights Council". I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Botnaru (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the introduction of draft resolution A/65/L.60, the following countries have joined as sponsors: Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Latvia, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Maldives, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Poland, Portugal, the Republic

of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Uruguay.

The President (*spoke in French*): May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft resolution A/65/L.60?

Draft resolution A/65/L.60 was adopted (resolution 65/265).

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote or position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Valero Briceño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela expresses its deep regret over recent events in Libya and laments the loss of human lives in that brotherly country.

Venezuela is historically linked to the Arab and African worlds. Our roots are nourished by those ancient cultures, which have greatly contributed to the forging of human relations on the basis on peace, solidarity and justice. The Venezuelan people stand with the Libyan people in the struggle for national liberation and the self-determination of peoples and in forging solidarity among the countries of the South. The free Libyan people must define their own destiny without foreign interference. Sovereign peoples are the only protagonists of history, and no foreign force is authorized to intervene in the internal affairs of the Libyan nation.

We commend the efforts of friendly countries members of the Security Council to prevent resolution 1970 (2011) from becoming an instrument for war. That resolution should not be interpreted beyond the objective of preserving the sovereign unity and territorial integrity of Libya. We urge peace-loving countries in all regions of the world to stop the plans to invade Libya that were unashamedly announced by the Department of State and the Pentagon of the United States. The aim of such plans is clear — to appropriate the vast potential of natural resources and strategic and energy wealth of the motherland of Libya.

According to the Agence France Presse news agency, the Pentagon stated that "the United States army is repositioning military forces around Libya". However, the Security Council resolution has not authorized military intervention. Nevertheless, an imperialist country is unilaterally and visibly deploying its military machinery to carry out armed aggression against Libya. In today's edition, the Spanish newspaper *El País* states: "Obama proposes establishing a no-fly zone to the United Nations. The United States mobilizes naval forces towards Libya for a possible intervention."

Venezuela calls for the rejection of that warmongering mobilization of the United States air and naval forces in the Mediterranean Sea. Those who promote the use of military force against Libya seek not to defend human rights, but to establish a protectorate to violate them, as they have always done, in one of the largest sources of oil and energy in the Middle East region.

Secessionist manoeuvres have a long history, and very recent experiences confirm that it is one of the tactics used by the imperialist Powers, inciting divisions on ethnic, religious or any grounds and the fragmentation of nations, which, in general, leads to fratricidal wars that tend to be used in order to justify foreign invasion.

We are convinced that the Libyan, Arab, African and all peace-loving peoples in all corners of the world will reject the military occupation of Libya. We reiterate our condemnation of violence, imperialism and interventionism. We urge the countries represented here to help preserve the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Libya. We deplore the double standard applied to human rights by imperialist countries.

The death of one human being is painful. The deaths of hundreds of people in Libya are painful. Also painful are the deaths of thousands of human beings who endure imperialist military invasions. We hail the Arab peoples who are in the process of a peaceful and justified rebellion and who seek a better future on the path of peace.

It is time for diplomacy for peace, not war. It is time for dialogue, not violence. The United Nations

exists to promote peace and understanding, not to promote the logic of war. We must not permit the dynamics of death and the logic of annihilation to develop in Libya and to prevail among brothers and sisters of the same nation.

President Hugo Chávez Frías yesterday proposed the establishment of a goodwill international commission to seek peace in Libya. It is necessary to promote immediately a dialogue between the Government of Muammar Al-Qadhafi and the opposition forces in order to achieve understanding and reconciliation for the Libyan people.

The President (*spoke in French*): The 10 minutes allotted to statements in explanation of vote have elapsed and I would ask the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to conclude.

Mr. Valero Briceño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): We implore almighty God to ensure that the African Union, the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America and the Union of South American Nations will urgently devote themselves to work for peace in that country.

Allow me to conclude by asking: Who will pay for the more than 1 million deaths in Iraq? Who will pay for the ongoing massacre against the Palestinian people? Why have confessed authors of such war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity not stood before the International Criminal Court? What action has the Security Council taken with respect to these horrendous massacres, which continue with impunity?

Finally, we wish to state for the record that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has reservations with respect to the contents of paragraph 1 of resolution 65/265, which was just adopted by this General Assembly and pursuant to which it decides to suspend the membership rights of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in the Human Rights Council. Such a decision may take place only following an objective and credible investigation to confirm the veracity of events. No country can be condemned a priori. We consider this decision to be precipitous, as it was taken without awaiting the results of the investigation to be carried out by the independent international commission of inquiry designated by the Human Rights Council pursuant to its resolution S-15/1 of 25 February.

The President (*spoke in French*): We have heard the only speaker in explanation of position.

I now call on delegations wishing to make general statements following the adoption of resolution 65/265.

Ms. Rice (United States of America): For the first time ever, the General Assembly has suspended a member of the Human Rights Council. This is a harsh rebuke, but one that Libya's leaders have brought down upon themselves. The United States continues to be appalled by the situation in Libya, and our thoughts and prayers are with the families of the Libyans who have been killed.

The General Assembly has come together to speak with one voice to Libya's unrepentant rulers. This unprecedented action sends another clear warning to Mr. Al-Qadhafi and those who still stand by him. They must stop the killing. When the only way a leader can cling to power is by grossly and systematically violating his own people's human rights, he has lost any legitimacy to rule. He must go and he must go now.

The protests in Libya are being driven by the people of Libya. This is about the universal human rights of the Libyan people and all people, and about a regime that has failed to meet its responsibility to protect its own population. The United States was pleased to be a co-sponsor of resolution 65/265, along with partners from all regions of the world, which underscores the universality of this decision and the depth of our commitment to the human rights we all share.

I must add that the United States utterly rejects the wilful and ugly distortion by the Venezuelan delegation of United States policy and posture. At a time when this Assembly is acting in unison in support of the Libyan people, it is shameful that one Member State, whose own reprehensible record speaks for itself, would manipulate this occasion to spread lies, foster fear and sow hate.

The General Assembly today has, by contrast, acted in the noblest traditions of the United Nations and made it clear that Governments that turn their guns on their own people have no place on the Human Rights Council. Membership on the Human Rights Council should be earned through respect for human rights and not accorded to those who abuse them. We

hope that we can work together to build on today's united, bold and principled action to defend universal human rights across the United Nations system. We applaud the members of the General Assembly for taking this historic decision.

Mr. Kőrösi (Hungary) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to begin my statement in Arabic as an expression of our solidarity with and deep respect for the people of Libya who are now struggling in their own land for freedom, their basic rights and their human rights. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU).

(*spoke in English*)

The candidate countries Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland and Montenegro; and the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Serbia, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia align themselves with this declaration.

The massive and shocking violence against peaceful demonstrators and other civilians in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya requires a clear response from the international community. As part of this response, the General Assembly today adopted resolution 65/265. Indeed, today's decision was made possible by the mobilization of countries from all regions. The international community has spoken with one voice.

This action has shown that, in moments of gravest need, Member States can find unity across the lines that so often divide this Assembly. Last Friday's special session of the Human Rights Council concluded with a strong consensus on forming an independent international commission of inquiry and recommending that the General Assembly suspend Libya's rights of membership in the Council.

The EU congratulates Botswana, Jordan, Lebanon, Nigeria and Qatar for taking the initiative to transform the Human Rights Council recommendation into the necessary General Assembly resolution. These countries have shown great leadership. They have responded with the sense of urgency that the situation demands. Their initiative has the full support of the European Union.

The EU therefore warmly welcomes the adoption today of resolution 65/265 by the General Assembly. This is the right response to the seriousness of the situation on the ground — the use of live ammunition and heavy weaponry against peaceful demonstrators exercising their right to freedom of assembly; the ongoing violent repression of civilians; and the suppression of freedom of expression through the blocking of electronic communications.

The urgency and extreme severity of the situation have been underlined by the Security Council, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the African Union, the League of Arab States, various United Nations Special Rapporteurs, the EU itself and a wide range of international actors. In particular, the High Commissioner for Human Rights has recalled that each State has an obligation to protect the rights to life, liberty and security of the person. The EU fully supports this position and recalls moreover that the 2005 World Summit Outcome document (resolution 60/1) reaffirmed that each individual State has the responsibility to protect its population from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, and that the international community, through the United Nations, has the responsibility to act should the national authorities fail to fulfil their duty.

The General Assembly cannot remain silent in the face of the shocking events taking place now in Libya. Upon its election to the Council last May, Libya pledged full commitment to all its human rights obligations. Unfortunately, these pledges have been blatantly violated. Membership in the Council indeed carries certain duties and obligations. Under resolution 60/251, United Nations Members elected to the Council are required to uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights and to fully cooperate with the Council. Resolution 60/251 also foresees the possibility of suspending the rights of membership in the Council of a member of the Council that commits gross and systematic violations of human rights. The General Assembly has therefore simply made use of the available instruments foreseen at the time of the Human Rights Council's creation.

Today's decision is in no way a punishment of the people of Libya. On the contrary, it is a resounding message of solidarity with them and of extreme concern for their plight. The EU, of course, stands ready to re-examine in the General Assembly the question of the membership rights of Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in the Human Rights Council on the basis of the evolution of the situation, and hopes that future

events will soon allow us to reinstate Libya's full membership.

Meanwhile, much remains to be done by the United Nations and the international community to protect the Libyan population, to address the humanitarian needs created by the violence and unrest, to allow all foreigners in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to be safely evacuated, to investigate responsibilities for the ongoing crimes and to hold perpetrators fully accountable. In this regard, the Security Council showed great decisiveness on Saturday in adopting unanimously a strong resolution (resolution 1970 (2011)) with important mandatory measures, such as the arms embargo, a travel ban and a freeze of the assets of those responsible, as well as the referral to the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court of the situation in Libya.

Equally today, the General Assembly, the universal voice of the United Nations membership, has taken determined action and used the instruments at its disposal to send a powerful message to the world.

Mr. Heller (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Government of Mexico reiterates its energetic condemnation of the violence that has been used in Libya to repress peaceful demonstrations, as well as the extrajudicial executions, indiscriminate attacks on the population, and grave and systematic violations of human rights in that country. Full respect for human rights is an obligation that cannot be renounced by the authorities. At all times and in any circumstances, the Government of Libya is obligated to protect the population on its territory.

The responsibility to protect human rights is universal and knows no borders. States members of the Human Rights Council have a commitment and a duty to strictly observe human rights norms; that is a responsibility that they assume in joining the Council. That is why the situation in Libya is a source of even greater concern. Given the gravity of events, Mexico believed that it was absolutely necessary to preserve the Council's integrity and to support the General Assembly's recommendation that Libya's membership in the Human Rights Council be suspended until the situation there is stabilized, human rights are fully respected, and the rule of law is restored. For the first time, the General Assembly has acted in full implementation of the letter and spirit of resolution 60/251, thereby ensuring that the international system for protecting human rights remains credible.

Finally, I wish to thank those countries of the African and Arab Groups that have demonstrated their commitment to human rights in presenting the important resolution 65/265, of which Mexico has become a co-sponsor.

Mr. Salam (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): It was an honour for my country to sponsor resolution 65/265, adopted today. It did so for various reasons, foremost of which is the fact that Lebanon was among those countries that laid the foundations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by participating in the work of the committee mandated by the General Assembly to draft the Declaration. Having suffered war and violence for many years, my country is endowed with a Constitution that declares its commitment to the Declaration.

As we witness the numerous flagrant violations of human rights taking place in Libya today, we must recall that such violations have occurred for many years. The most blatant of these was the crime committed in 1978, when the national and spiritual leader of Lebanon, Imam Musa al-Sadr, and his two companions were kidnapped and disappeared. He was a man of dialogue who spoke up for freedom and the values of human rights.

Finally, the matter before us today demonstrates to all who may have any lingering doubts that human rights are a universal issue in which no person, religion, culture or region of the world enjoys precedence over any other.

The President (*spoke in French*): As there remain 23 speakers on my list, I now declare the list of speakers to be closed.

Mr. Cabactulan (Philippines): At the outset, the Philippines expresses its profound appreciation to you, Sir, for convening this important and timely meeting on the situation in Libya.

As I have stressed on several occasions, in our highly interdependent and networked world, geographic distance and remoteness no longer isolate countries and regions from developments in other countries and regions. The ongoing tension and conflict in Libya, if not resolved peacefully and quickly, could adversely affect the entire region — indeed, the world — given the tendency of conflicts and volatile

situations in one country or region to spill over to others. As Libya plunges into more chaos, even distant countries like the Philippines are not immune to such upheavals. In addition to the internally displaced population in Libya, the ubiquity of citizens of third-party States there demands that the international community ensure their security and welfare. The Philippines calls upon Member States in a position to do so to allow access and provide safe passage to citizens of third-party States who are fleeing the situation in Libya.

The Philippines and Libya have strong and vibrant bilateral ties. It is for that reason that the Philippines is deeply concerned about the situation of a close friend. We hope and pray that the bloodshed and violence in Libya will soon end and that peace and stability will once again reign in that country. At stake for the Philippines are the security and well-being of around 26,000 Filipino nationals in Libya. As we speak, my Government is doing its best to ensure the safety and welfare of Filipino nationals there and is exerting the utmost effort to evacuate them to safer ground. In that regard, I wish to take this opportunity to thank Tunisia, Egypt, Malta, Greece and Turkey, as well the other Mediterranean countries that have allowed safe passage to Filipinos who are transiting their territories in order to return to their homeland.

The United Nations and the international community have an inescapable responsibility to extend whatever assistance can be offered to the Libyan people during this time of emergency and cataclysmic change. The stakes are high not only for Libya but also for the entire world. The time-tested tools of diplomacy and peaceful dialogue between contending parties must be harnessed and reinforced with vigour. A military solution will only cause more tragedy and hardship for the Libyan people.

The Philippines expresses its solidarity with the people of Libya. As a country that experienced a peaceful political transition 25 years ago through a people's power revolution, the Philippines knows the high price and tremendous sacrifice exacted by achieving political freedom, economic liberties and justice in a non-violent way. The road to democracy is a long and arduous process, studded with barriers and obstacles. But in the end the beacon of democracy will not be extinguished and will continue to inspire oppressed peoples around the world who are determined to free themselves.

Mr. McNee (Canada): Canada joins other speakers in applauding the adoption of resolution 65/265, which suspends the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya's rights of membership in the Human Rights Council. Canada joins the rest of the international community in expressing our outrage at the appalling images from Libya of the Al-Qadhafi regime's brutal attacks against its own people. The world cannot stand by idly as Al-Qadhafi and the members of his family threaten to spill even more innocent blood in their attempt to retain power.

To continue to allow the Al-Qadhafi regime a voice in the Human Rights Council would be an affront not only to the people of Libya, who have risen up to demand freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law, but also to the entire international community, which looks to the Human Rights Council as the principal body of the United Nations for promoting and protecting human rights and for addressing situations where violations occur.

It was for situations such as this that the General Assembly provided for the possibility of the suspension of membership rights in the Human Rights Council in resolution 60/251. The failure to act in the face of the gross and systematic violations of human rights that are taking place in Libya would have seriously undermined the credibility of the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly. Canada is therefore pleased that the Assembly, a body of universal membership, was able to respond so swiftly today.

Ms. Hussain (Maldives): On 25 February, the Human Rights Council took a historic step and recommended that Libya's membership in the Council be suspended because of its gross and systematic violations of human rights (see A/HRC/S-15/2). A day later, the Security Council built on that with its own resolution 1970 (2011), imposing sanctions and embargoes on the regime. Today the General Assembly has taken action to suspend Libya's membership rights in the Human Rights Council. Those decisions, while important steps, are not enough to save the many lives that are being lost as we speak here. Firm decisions and actions must be taken against such violations of the rights of innocent citizens.

The Maldives strongly condemns the violence unleashed by the Libyan authorities against their own people — people who are merely trying to assert their

universal rights to freedom of expression and association and to democratically choose their own Government. It is clear that gross and systematic violations of human rights have been perpetrated in Libya and that, in all likelihood, they constitute crimes against humanity. It is evident that the Libyan dictatorship has no intention of upholding its principal responsibility to protect its people. It is therefore the duty of the international community to intervene. We, the community of nations, have a clear and unambiguous responsibility to protect innocent men, women and children in Libya; to remove Muammar Al-Qadhafi and his allies from power and hold them accountable for their crimes; and to help build a new democratic country.

The Maldives, a fellow Muslim country responding to the calls of our brothers and sisters in Libya, commends all Member States of this body for the adoption of resolution 65/265. Today's action in the General Assembly must be followed by the continued commitment and unfailing urgent action on the part of the international community.

Mr. Osorio (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): The world is currently witnessing one of the most shameful and reprehensible events of recent years: a dictatorial regime's violent repression of its own people and a flagrant violation of human rights. The United Nations system has reacted with the speed and urgency that the situation requires. The Security Council, after calling for a return to common sense and the peaceful management of popular protests, which was ignored by the Libyan authorities, unanimously adopted resolution 1970 (2011) to impose sanctions and refer the situation in Libya to the International Criminal Court to establish responsibility for the crimes committed.

Colombia reiterates the urgency of ending the violence and demands that the Libyan authorities comply strictly with their international obligations and with international humanitarian law. We reject unequivocally incitements from official quarters and condemn the violations of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the Libyan people. The State should assume its primary responsibility of guaranteeing the security and rights of its citizens, including the right to life and freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

Colombia has maintained a firm and consistent position in all the forums that have addressed this situation. We were a sponsor of the Human Rights Security Council resolution, which established an international commission of inquiry into the violations committed in Libya and recommended suspending Libya's membership in the Human Rights Council. In addition to that resolution, we also sponsored resolution 65/265, in which the Assembly decided to suspend Libya's membership in the Human Rights Council.

The aspiration of the people of Libya to live in a more fair and equitable society, in which its citizens can fully enjoy their rights and fundamental freedoms, is legitimate. Reconciliation will require identifying responsibilities, addressing impunity and ensuring that those who are committing or have committed crimes against humanity are brought to justice. The international community must remain united and vigilant and continue to take measures that will put an end to the violations being committed by the repressive regime of Libya.

Mr. Errázuriz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): The serious events unfolding in Libya and the unacceptable repression being exercised by the Government of Colonel Al-Qadhafi, which Chile has expressly condemned, have brought us here together today to decide on the suspension of Libya's rights as a member of the Human Rights Council, pursuant to the power set forth in paragraph 8 of resolution 60/251, which created the Human Rights Council.

Human rights are universal, indivisible, interrelated, interdependent and mutually reinforcing. The disproportionate and brutal reaction of the Government of Tripoli to its people's protests demanding the legitimate right to reform is completely unacceptable on the part of any Member State, and all the more so on the part of a member of the Human Rights Council. Libya, moreover, has been seriously deficient in its responsibility to protect its civilian population. We should be particularly concerned about the situation of women and children in that country.

Resolution 60/251, which established the Human Rights Council, sets forth in paragraph 9 that members of the Council should "uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights". Clearly, this is not the case with respect to Libya.

Chile, as a member of the Human Rights Council, co-sponsored resolution S-15/1, which was adopted on Friday by the Council, and the resolution that was

recently adopted by the Assembly. It supported both because the promotion and defence of human rights is one of the pillars of Chile's foreign and domestic policy, and because it is strongly committed to this Organization, the human rights system and, more specifically, the Human Rights Council.

It is inconceivable that a Government that is systematically violating the human rights and fundamental freedoms of its own people could belong to the Council. We hope that circumstances will change and that the Assembly will soon be able to meet once again in order to restore the rights that have been suspended today.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Resolution 65/265 adopted today refers not only to the situation in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, but, equally importantly, to the United Nations, its various intergovernmental forums and the difficult dilemmas we sometimes face in reconciling the different principles and purposes contained in the Charter.

For example, our Organization prides itself on its universal nature, and, in that context, we value the diversity of points of view in our forums. In the entire history of the United Nations, we have resorted only in a handful of cases to the suspension or expulsion of a Member State from one or more forums. This is another way of saying that the requirements for belonging to our Organization are not very stringent. Rather, we understand that pluralism and diversity are strengths of multilateral diplomacy.

The adoption of resolution 60/251 and the resolution adopted today, however, sends a signal that our community of nations demands that certain limits be imposed on the code of conduct of Member States. The matter that concerns us today exceeds those limits. There is no doubt that the most elemental human rights of the people of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya have been systematically and flagrantly violated; or, stated differently, that the Government of that country is not even minimally fulfilling its responsibility to protect its civilian population. This means that it lacks the moral authority to give opinions on the manner in which other countries meet the human rights recognized in the Universal Declaration.

In that regard, we understand that the resolution adopted earlier not only constitutes an act of solidarity with the people of Libya, but also strengthens the mechanisms at the disposal of the United Nations to defend and promote human rights at the global level, and for that reason we welcome it.

Mr. Núñez Mosquera (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Cuba fully shares the international concern over the deaths of civilians in Libya and stands in support of a peaceful and sovereign solution of the conflict by the Libyan people, without foreign interference or intervention. We follow with concern the repeated statements of United States and European Union officials alluding to the fact that they are considering military options in Libya, and reports in the press of the movement of troops and military assets towards the area. Cuba categorically opposes any military intervention in that country, which would lead to thousands of deaths and have very serious consequences for the world economy.

On 25 February, in Geneva, the Cuban delegation dissociated itself from operative paragraph 14 of resolution S-15/1, on the human rights situation in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, which was adopted at the special session convened by the Human Rights Council on the subject of that country. As the Cuban representative said in his statement at that time, the content of that paragraph sets a dangerous precedent for cooperation in the area of human rights, which the Council must uphold through its work.

From the outset, when we were building the new Council, Cuba opposed the clause on the suspension of membership of a given State. We had hoped to have a body that would be free from the double standards and politicization that discredited the former Commission on Human Rights. The inclusion of this clause in resolution 60/251 set a negative precedent in saddling the new Council with an additional burden that is without parallel in any other United Nations body.

Further, the manipulation of the language of paragraph 8 of resolution 60/251 is a serious challenge to the principle of the sovereign equality of States. It endorses membership in the Council of all States Members of the United Nations, but at the same time establishes prerequisites for joining the body and imposes the possibility of expulsion without setting a minimum limit of required votes. In other words, a country elected with the support of the majority of members of the General Assembly can have its rights suspended by the will of a minority or even a small number of countries, since the suspension clause can be triggered with the support of two thirds of those

present and voting, which could be a tiny minority of Member States.

Fortunately, that clause has never been invoked until today. Its use on this occasion opens the door for those wishing to legitimize that mechanism with a view to using it selectively against those countries that reject imposition and foreign interference. It is not by chance that the most enthusiastic promoters of implementing that clause are those developed countries with a long-standing tendency to accuse States of the South while remaining silently complicit on human rights violations in the North. We cannot fail to note the attitude of the country that voted against resolution 60/251, whereas now it is the first to promote the use of one of the most negative attributes of a text that it rejected at the time.

We will see if the General Assembly is capable of deciding on the suspension of a powerful State, responsible for the deaths of thousands of innocent citizens in its conquering ventures and for the disappearance, torture and extrajudicial execution of human beings confined in secret concentration camps.

Mr. Thalassinós (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): Panama energetically condemns the systematic violations of the human rights of the Libyan people, who yearn to live in peace and freedom. Panama laments the loss of human lives and extends its sincerest condolences to the victims' families.

Panama supports Human Rights Council resolution S-15/1 and hopes for the urgent dispatch of an independent international commission to investigate serious human rights violations in Libya. All Governments have the fundamental and irrevocable responsibility to protect their people. The current Libyan regime has flouted that responsibility by suppressing its own people. Given those realities, Panama supports Libya's suspension from its seat in the Human Rights Council, and therefore endorses today's adoption by consensus of resolution 65/265.

Our country, Panama, expresses its complete support for Security Council resolution 1970 (2011) as a first mechanism to curb the very serious situation in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. Today, it is urgent to take immediate and resolute measures to safeguard lives that remain in danger. Panama stands firmly with the Libyan people, who, at this historic time, are fighting for the rule of a democratic regime with an unbreakable will.

Mr. Ulibarri (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): For the first time since the establishment of the Human Rights Council, the General Assembly has decided to suspend one of its members for gross and systematic human rights violations. Costa Rica condemns such violations, ordered at the highest levels of the Libyan Government.

That suspension, which we support, constitutes a historic decision, in full compliance with international law and with our responsibility as Members of the United Nations to protect the lives, integrity and fundamental rights of human beings. That responsibility is enshrined in our Charter and embodied in paragraph 8 of resolution 60/251. We are acting pursuant to the request made by the Human Rights Council in its resolution S/15-1 and in the same spirit that has guided the Secretary-General, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Security Council, the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Foreign Affairs Council of the European Union, and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union with regard to this case.

Moreover, we uphold this universal reaction to the perverse actions undertaken against unarmed civilians, which could reach the extreme of crimes against humanity, as recognition of the importance of human rights in the international system and in multilateral action.

In highlighting these elements, we should not forget that the Government that we have just suspended did not become a voracious repression machine in recent weeks. It already had that character, which gave rise to the current violations, when it was elected to the Council last year; even so, it received enough votes to become a member. Therefore, to a certain extent, the resolution adopted today is also a way of rectifying that mistake. If there is any lesson that we should learn from this situation, it is the need to improve the parameters for joining the Council.

Today, the Libyan people will welcome our reaction. We hope that, in the future, other peoples rather thank our prevention.

Mr. Rodríguez (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Human Rights Council is responsible for promoting universal respect for the protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of persons. As such, it was established to be seized of situations in which there are

violations, including serious and systematic violations, of such rights.

It is therefore paradoxical that the Government of a State member of the Human Rights Council not only does not protect those rights and promote fundamental freedoms, but, on the contrary, uses all its strength to violently curtail such rights and fundamental freedoms. For that reason and owing to its consistent commitment to human rights, Peru co-sponsored resolution 65/265, which we have just adopted.

Peru reiterates its energetic condemnation of the ongoing suppression by the Libyan Government against demonstrators who are expressing their discontent and are peacefully demanding, as is their right, reform of the country's political system. That suppression must immediately cease. Moreover, the Government of Peru deplores the loss of human lives and the use of violence, while expressing its condolences to the families of all the victims.

In line with its principles in support of the promotion and protection of human rights, the Government of Peru has suspended its diplomatic relations with Libya until it ends the violence against the Libyan people. It has formally requested the Secretary-General to intervene to ensure the peace and security of the Libyan people.

In this context, we have supported the calls of both the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner for Human Rights for an independent inquiry into the violations of human rights and to ascribe responsibility for them. Peru co-sponsored the special session of the Human Rights Council on the situation of human rights in Libya, as well as resolution S-15/2 adopted therein. My country fully subscribes to the tenor of the Security Council's unanimously adopted resolution 1970 (2011).

In conclusion, resolution 65/265, adopted today, is completely consistent with the measures that we as States should take when members of the Human Rights Council do not meet their responsibilities. The decision we have taken, which complies with the provision of resolution 60/251, strengthens the Council's credibility and sends a signal of respect for the human rights of the Libyan people and the entire world.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): As a sponsor of resolution 65/265, we welcome the Assembly's consensus decision to suspend Libya's membership rights in the Human Rights Council. The reports from Libya continue to be alarming, and include widespread incidences of extrajudicial killings and arbitrary detentions and arrests, as well as torture. The scale and systematic nature of the offences that the regime is inciting and committing is a cause for serious concern that those acts may amount to crimes against humanity. We therefore welcome the Human Rights Council's establishment of a commission of inquiry and the Security Council's referral of the situation to the International Criminal Court. The fact that both decisions were made by consensus shows that the United Nations stands united to ensure full accountability on the part of those responsible.

Today, the General Assembly has acted for the first time on a case where a member of the Human Rights Council has blatantly violated its pledge and duty to uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights. The suspension was recommended by the Council in its decision last Friday; it should be understood, however, that the General Assembly can act on its own initiative under the terms of resolution 60/251 — a resolution that in its integrity enables us to promote and protect human rights in a comprehensive manner.

The Assembly, the only universal organ of the United Nations, has acted in accordance with the letter and spirit of that resolution, and has thus assumed its responsibility to react decisively to the situation in Libya. It has thereby strengthened its own authority and the standing of the Human Rights Council, and has once again sent a message that the international community stands with the people of Libya.

Mr. Michelsen (Norway): Norway would like to thank Botswana, Jordan, Lebanon, Nigeria and Qatar for bringing this timely initiative to the General Assembly. The membership of the United Nations has responded to their call by supporting resolution 65/265 across regions and political divides. By taking action today we have exercised the stated will of the Assembly, when it established the Human Rights Council, to allow for the suspension of members of the Council that commit gross and systematic violations of human rights.

The Human Rights Council, in its special session on 25 February, unanimously condemned the gross and systematic human rights violations committed in Libya, sending a clear message that the ruthless use of violence against peaceful protesters is entirely

unacceptable. And by adopting today's resolution, the Assembly has acted on the Council's urgent recommendation. Similarly, Norway commends the 15 members of the Security Council for reacting swiftly, unanimously and with precision, in adopting Saturday's landmark resolution 1970 (2011) in response to the madness perpetrated by the Al-Qadhafi regime.

As a member of the Human Rights Council, Norway warmly welcomes the adoption of today's resolution. By suspending Libya's right to exercise its membership in the Council, the General Assembly has maintained the Council's credibility, as well as its own. Moreover, we have sent an unequivocal message of support to the people of Libya, who are standing up for their inalienable human rights.

Mr. Nishida (Japan): In May, the General Assembly elected the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to membership in the Human Rights Council. Japan is deeply concerned about the gross and systematic violations of human rights currently being committed by the Libyan Government. On that basis, Japan co-sponsored resolution 65/265 suspending the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya's membership rights in the Human Rights Council.

Japan condemns the Government's violence and use of force against its own citizens. We express our deep condolences to the families of the many victims of that violence, and offer our heartfelt sympathy to the injured. All the perpetrators of these heinous acts must be brought to justice. Japan urges the Libyan authorities, including their leader, Muammar Al-Qadhafi, to put an immediate halt to the violence against Libya's people, and calls urgently on them to comply without delay with the demands set forth in the Human Rights Council's resolution S-15/1 and Security Council resolution 1970 (2011).

Lastly, Japan hopes fervently that, once stability is restored, Libya will move forward with fundamental reforms that adequately reflect the broad spectrum of the opinions of its people, in accordance with all the international human rights instruments to which Libya is party, and will ensure the protection and promotion of the people's human rights.

Mr. Karev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation firmly condemns the use of force against the peaceful protesters in Libya, which has led to great loss of life among the civilian population. We are convinced that a solution to the current problems in that country cannot and must not lie in the use of force. A dialogue is needed to prevent any further schism in Libya's society and any interference in the country's internal affairs and sovereignty. Settling the current crisis is the prerogative of the Libyan people themselves.

The Russian delegation joined in the consensus adoption of resolution 65/265 on the suspension of the membership rights of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in the Human Rights Council. However, we proceed from the premise that the decision in question does not establish a precedent, including in regard to the lack of a definition of practical procedural aspects in paragraph 8 of resolution 60/251. It is also important that the resolution refers to the suspension of rights of membership in the Human Rights Council, and not to depriving a country of its membership in the major human rights body of the United Nations; and that, as noted in the statement of the African Union, Libya's seat in the Human Rights Council is not vacant, and that there will be no additional elections to fill any such vacancy.

Mr. McLay (New Zealand): New Zealand has watched with concern the grave developments that continue to unfold in Libya. We therefore applaud today's adoption of resolution 65/265. We express solidarity with those courageous Libyans who are seeking an end to a totalitarian regime. We strongly condemn the actions that have slaughtered hundreds of civilians and we express our condolences to the bereaved and our sympathy to the injured.

The Libyan regime's systematic use of deadly force, including aerial and rocket attacks against civilians, evokes memories of other such violations by tyrants, and may well be crimes against humanity. These attacks violate the rights to life, freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. No regime has the right to turn its own country and the lives of its own people into "a living hell".

On Friday, in an historically important move, the Human Rights Council decided it could not silently stand by and watch such grave abuses of human rights. New Zealand welcomed and supported Human Rights Council resolution S-15/1. We have supported this General Assembly decision to exercise its power to suspend the rights of any member of the Council that

commits gross and systematic human rights violations. We were a sponsor of the resolution to that effect.

Libya was a member of the Human Rights Council. Respect for human rights was one of the pillars on which the United Nations was founded. The United Nations membership had therefore placed Libya in a position of the greatest trust and responsibility. Libya sought that Council role and has a special responsibility to uphold the highest standards of human rights. The Libyan Government has grossly abused that trust. There is no evidence whatsoever that it is in any way protecting its citizens from human rights abuses. Indeed, tragically, everything indicates to the contrary.

New Zealand urges Libya to respect the will of its people. We call on the Libyan authorities to work with the international community to bring about a peaceful solution to the crisis, to ensure that humanitarian assistance is available to those in need and to uphold their responsibility to protect their citizens.

New Zealand urges accountability for those responsible for attacks on civilians and welcomes the Security Council's decision to refer the situation in Libya to the International Criminal Court (see Security Council resolution 1970 (2011)).

This has been an important moment for the credibility of the United Nations. We, today, had a responsibility to say that we will not tolerate these insults to human rights and would not allow such violators to sit at the human rights table. We have a responsibility to the people of Libya to discharge those responsibilities accordingly. We have accomplished these tasks.

Mr. Ntwaagae (Botswana): My delegation joined the list of sponsors of landmark resolution 65/265, which the Assembly has just adopted by consensus, as a gesture of support and solidarity with the people of Libya. In recent days, the world community has watched helplessly as the people of Libya continued to bear the brunt of the excessive use of force, gross violations of human rights and brutality perpetrated by their Government. Botswana has severed diplomatic relations with Libya in protest against that Government's actions. The carnage must cease forthwith.

The international community has a duty and responsibility to ensure that the Government of Libya exercises its responsibility to protect the fundamental rights, freedoms and dignity of its people.

The Assembly will recall that resolution 60/251, which established the Human Rights Council on 15 March 2006, carries a commitment that "members elected to the Council shall uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights" (*para. 9*). This means that any member elected to the Council has a duty and obligation to provide guardianship and to lead by example in terms of cultivating a peaceful atmosphere for the full enjoyment and exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms by its citizens, including the freedom of expression and freedom of assembly.

My delegation takes the view that the membership in the Council of any member State that fails to measure up to these values is not worth preserving. We feel strongly that the rare fortune and privilege of being entrusted with authority to govern should always be complemented by a significant measure of humility and accountability.

Our action in the Assembly today represents a strong collective expression of the international community's disapproval of the abuse of privilege and lack of remorse on the part of the Libyan authorities for the grave human rights violations being committed in that country.

By adopting this resolution, the General Assembly has sent a clear and strong message that the continued indiscriminate use of excessive force by a Government against its own people cannot be condoned any further. Botswana believes these actions are extremely reprehensible and warrant the step the Assembly has just taken: the suspension of Libya's membership rights in the Human Rights Council, as provided for in paragraph 8 of the Council's founding resolution 60/251.

Mrs. Rubiales de Chamorro (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): As a country that has survived several military occupations and acts of aggression by a foreign Power, for which we have paid a high price in Nicaraguan lives, Nicaragua advocates and will continue to advocate for peace and reconciliation. Wherever and under all circumstances, dialogue and negotiation among brothers is the only viable way to resolve internal conflicts and guarantee the sovereignty and integrity of a nation and its territory.

Nicaragua is extremely concerned about the loss of life among innocent civilians. In this case in particular, we profoundly regret the loss of life among the people of Libya, a country with which Nicaragua has enjoyed close links. We trust in the abilities and the wisdom of the Libyan people and its leadership, headed by Muammar Al-Qadhafi, to resolve their domestic problems and find a peaceful solution in a sovereign manner, without foreign interference, double standards or foreign military intervention of any type or under any justification.

This is why we are deeply concerned by the ferocious media campaign being waged against Libya and its people. The news is contradictory, inflated and used at the whim of the great centres of power. It serves only to incite violence and seeks to justify foreign military aggression and intervention, which would only lead to more bloodshed, chaos and destabilization, opening the way once again to those who wish to appropriate the vast oil resources of the Libyan people.

Nicaragua wishes to state for the record that it condemns all attempts by those Powers to divide Libya's territory in order to acquire its natural resources. Nicaragua would also like to state on the record that implementing this measure to suspend Libya from the Human Rights Council will not only fail to resolve the domestic crisis being experienced by the Libyan people, but will also set a bad precedent. Suspending a country's rights as a member of the Human Rights Council, precipitously and based upon the sort of information we have seen from media disseminated from the great power centres, creates a precedent for countries that use selectivity as their principal guide to foreign policy. Those countries, which turn a blind eye to their own massive human rights violations while claiming that the rest of us should ignore them as well, are the same countries that invade our peoples and set up secret prisons. Nicaragua rejects and condemns such a double standard in moral values.

Human rights violations include those perpetrated against the Arab and Palestinian peoples; against Nicaragua, as noted in the decision of the International Court of Justice; and against the five Cuban heroes.

Nicaragua calls for calm and negotiation, putting aside double standards, and the promotion of dialogue. We hold out the hope that the Libyan people will be able to achieve peace while fully exercising their national sovereignty.

Mr. Kleib (Indonesia): Indonesia joins others in expressing its grave concern over the unravelling situation in Libya, which continues to deteriorate tragically. The people and Government of Indonesia are deeply grieved by the loss of innocent Libyan lives as a result of hideous attacks. We are pained by the immense loss and destruction and express our heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims.

Indonesia has maintained its principled and steadfast position that, ultimately, it is the sovereign right and responsibility of the people of the nation concerned to chart their own democratic and peaceful path to overcome the challenges before them. However, we are seeing instead a Government that is unwilling to fulfil its basic responsibility to protect its own citizens and ensure their safety, security and welfare. Most alarmingly, the Government is only too willing to bring harm to its own citizens.

We share the international community's dismay over the manner in which the Libyan authorities have dealt with the legitimate aspirations of the people of Libya. The Libyan nation deserves peace and normal conditions in order to determine its future peacefully and through dialogue. The Libyan authorities must respect the voice of Libyan citizens and refrain from using force against them. They must respect international human rights and humanitarian law. We underscore that they should make the utmost effort to stop any further loss of life and suffering of the Libyan people.

The Libyan authorities must take urgent measures to protect foreign workers and nationals and facilitate the departure of those wishing to leave the country. In that regard, we underline the importance of cooperation among the countries and entities involved in evacuating foreign nationals.

We are pleased that the international community has spoken with one strong voice to state that the violence in Libya must be stopped. Regional and international organizations have also taken serious measures consistent with the United Nations Charter and the principles of international law to address the situation in Libya.

The General Assembly's adoption today of resolution 65/265 also reflects the crucial importance

of the international community's support and sends a strong signal on the importance of protecting and promoting basic human rights in Libya.

In conclusion, let me reaffirm my country's readiness to contribute to international endeavours to alleviate the suffering of Libyan citizens. We join the global community in urging the Libyan authorities to urgently take all measures necessary to end the misery of the innocent Libyans, to provide them relief and to create and ensure conditions conducive to a democratic political process.

Ms. Zhang Dan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): In view of the extremely exceptional situation now prevailing in Libya and the views and concerns expressed by Arab and African countries, the Chinese delegation joined the consensus on resolution 65/265. At the same time, the Chinese delegation hopes that the General Assembly's suspension of Libya's membership rights in the Human Rights Council will not become a precedent.

Mr. Mahmood (Bangladesh): Bangladesh has followed with concern the recent developments in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. We are profoundly shocked and concerned by the onset of violence and human rights violations, which have generated a sense of insecurity in the region. We hope for a peaceful resolution of the ongoing crisis and an early return to normalcy.

Bangladesh is also concerned about the safety of all expatriates living in Libya. The safety and security of everyone within Libyan territory, including around 60,000 Bangladeshi expatriates, is greatly threatened. Bangladesh therefore calls upon all concerned to exercise maximum restraint in dealing with the humanitarian catastrophe in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

Mr. Sinhaseni (Thailand): As a member of the Human Rights Council, Thailand fully supports resolution 65/265, which has just been adopted by consensus. With this resolution, together with Security Council resolution 1970 (2011), adopted this past Saturday, the international community has sent a clear and strong signal that the violence and bloodshed against the Libyan people must end now. That represents a prompt response to the recommendation of the Human Rights Council to suspend the membership rights of Libya, which has been deemed to have committed gross and systematic violations of human rights, as stipulated in resolution 60/251.

I wish to draw the Assembly's attention to another dimension of the current crisis in Libya, namely, the plight of foreign workers in the country, as mentioned earlier by the Secretary-General and by my Philippine colleague from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Even under normal circumstances, the living and working conditions of foreign workers are often challenging and difficult. At times of crisis such as this, they become extremely vulnerable. In Thailand's case, we have more than 25,000 workers and students in Libya. The Government is doing all that it can to assist and bring them home safely. Since the crisis began, many who have been able to reach neighbouring countries have returned home safely. Even as I speak today, a chartered ship is transporting another 2,000 workers from Tripoli. Despite this massive and complex operation, those 2,000 represent only a fraction of the total number of Thais in Tripoli. Let me state for the record here Thailand's sincere thanks and appreciation for the cooperation and assistance extended to us by our friends, particularly Egypt and Tunisia.

It is our hope that the international community, together with the relevant United Nations agencies, will also give the issue of foreign workers the serious attention it deserves. While it is right for Member States to be concerned about the plight of the Libyan people and their courageous struggle, we should not ignore or forget others who are equally in need of our attention and assistance.

Mr. Carrión-Mena (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Consistent with its policy of respecting and defending human rights and promoting peace, Ecuador condemns the prevailing violence in Libya, which has already caused enormous bloodshed. My country has taken this stance on the basis of its own convictions and the provisions of its Constitution.

Ecuador is responding in a consistent manner to this situation, which is tragically affecting the human rights of the Libyan people. Along those lines, my country joined the consensus on resolution S-15/2 adopted last week by the Human Rights Council, in its capacity as a member of the Council. Ecuador cannot but reiterate once again its unconditional respect for the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs

of other States, without the exceptions or discrimination that have characterized other recent cases, perhaps the most pathetic example of which is Iraq.

Ecuador warns now that it will openly reject any possible military intervention in Libya. Resolution 65/265, which refers exclusively to the defence of human rights, should not be used for any purpose other than that of protecting the long-suffering Libyan people.

Mr. Solón (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Plurinational State of Bolivia joined the consensus adoption of resolution 65/265 because we reject the use of violence, regardless of its source, in particular against an unarmed civilian population. Nothing can justify the loss of human life.

Bolivia has lived through situations similar to those in the Middle East today. For instance, in October 2003, a neoliberal Government resorted to murderous machine-gunning tactics to quell the popular uprising in Bolivia. The human pain of massacres is not foreign to the life and history of the Bolivian people.

Nevertheless, the current consensus cannot be misinterpreted or used to promote military intervention. Libya must find peace in the context of the fullest respect for its sovereignty and territorial integrity, while preserving and guaranteeing the human rights of its entire population. Any attempt at foreign interference with a view to controlling Libya's natural and petroleum resources should be forcefully condemned. There is nothing worse than taking advantage of human suffering for geopolitical ends.

Bolivia therefore wishes to warn against the use of the mechanism being implemented for the first time by the Human Rights Council to selectively apply it to countries whose orientation differs from that of the dominant Powers. The defence of human rights cannot be subject to double standards or be more permissive with friends and stricter with those who express dissent.

To that extent, a comprehensive, independent and impartial investigation is needed into current events in Libya so as to avoid any manipulation by the media and to guarantee that justice is effectively served. The adoption of the resolution should send a clear signal that the violence in Libya must stop and that a peaceful solution must be found that respects the human rights of all in the context of sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Mr. Quinlan (Australia): Australia co-sponsored the historic resolution 65/265. We condemn the recent events in Libya. The Libyan Government must uphold its responsibility to protect its population. The international community has its own responsibility to act in such situations to protect civilian populations from mass atrocities, including crimes against humanity.

It is our very strong belief that the gross and systematic human rights violations recently committed by the Libyan regime warranted its suspension from the Human Rights Council in accordance with the General Assembly's own resolution 60/251. It is untenable that a regime so clearly failing in its responsibility to protect its own people is fit to serve on such a fundamental body. The General Assembly has been mandated to take precisely this action in precisely these circumstances. It is right that it has done so by consensus.

We welcome the strong statement issued by the League of Arab States, the communiqué issued by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and the statement of the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. The unanimous and robust actions subsequently taken by both the Security Council and the Human Rights Council sent a clear signal to the Libyan Government that the international community would not stand idly by in the face of such gross and systematic violations.

We welcome Security Council resolution 1970 (2011) and are working to implement it urgently, together with additional autonomous sanctions announced by Australia's Foreign Minister last weekend. We urge the Security Council to consider further action to protect the people of Libya, if necessary.

The Libyan people are crying out for freedom. Australia supports the universal rights and freedoms of the Libyan people. Our thoughts are with the Libyan people, who continue to struggle for freedom from oppression. We salute their bravery.

Mr. Reuben (Israel): Israel fully supports resolution 65/265 and Libya's suspension from membership in the Human Rights Council, which was

long overdue. For years, we have been calling attention to the dire and alarming human rights situation in our region. The Libyan situation is a representative case in point. It is regrettable that such tragedies are addressed only when crises and murderous crimes unfold, such as in this case, despite the fact that such systematic and long-standing abhorrent human rights violations have been well documented throughout the years.

Under its current notorious regime, Libya should never have been elected to sit as a member of the Human Rights Council. The international community's response to this appalling human rights crisis should serve as a wake-up call as we also deliberate the future of the Council and its membership.

Mr. Lima (Cape Verde) (*spoke in French*): There are times when people act to expedite the march of their history and shatter all predictions to impose a new reality that reflects their most fundamental and most legitimate aspirations. There are times in history when those upheavals are so profound and so decisive that they inspire some to understand their context and cause others to unreliably interpret geopolitical projections. We are witnessing what some have called the springtime of peoples in the Arab world. This is one of those historic moments in which past equations are reversed and regimes based on outdated values or that have lost the sense of history are shaken to their core. These are times that define a future, that are meant to be promising for all and that should be a time to shed sinful or unilateral interests.

What these people are asking for and protesting about in the streets of a number of countries is respect for human dignity; justice for all; freedom, and therefore more democracy and greater account taken of their basic aspirations. What people would not want to enjoy those eternal values? What people would not want to be master of its own destiny and able to choose freely its own path towards fulfilment and progress?

Today, faced with the terrible abuses perpetrated against the Libyan people by those who should be protecting them, and with what we must indeed call a crime committed against the Libyan people, the General Assembly has clearly stated its position by suspending Libya's membership rights in the Human Rights Council. Silence on our part at this juncture would not only be a crime but would constitute failure in the eyes of history. In this way, we express our solidarity with that great people, while responding to the call from the Human Rights Council.

That is why we support draft resolution 65/265, and we are glad to have been able to participate in this landmark effort by the United Nations.

Mr. Vigny (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the Arab and African States that took the initiative of submitting to the General Assembly resolution 65/265 suspending Libya's membership rights in the Human Rights Council, of which Switzerland was a sponsor. The resolution implements paragraph 14 of resolution S-15/2 adopted on 25 February by the Human Rights Council at its special session on the human rights situation in Libya.

Switzerland welcomes the adoption of resolution 65/265 in accordance with the relevant provisions of resolution 60/251. Today's resolution unquestionably strengthens the credibility of the Human Rights Council and therefore of the United Nations itself; and for my country, that is essential.

The President (*spoke in French*): We have heard the last speaker on my list for this meeting.

A Member State has asked to exercise its right of reply. I remind representatives that statements in right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first statement.

Mr. Valero Briceño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): We regret that we have to respond to the delegation of the United States, because the subject we are discussing is profoundly and universally human and thus not bilateral in nature. It is understandable that a Government with a long history of human rights violations in its own country and around the world should respond with false arguments to the self-evident references by the Venezuelan delegation to the interventionist policy of the United States.

The President (*spoke in French*): We have concluded our discussion. The Assembly has taken a powerful and significant decision that undoubtedly speaks to the hopes of millions of men and women that the General Assembly, and the United Nations as a whole, can show itself to be an uncompromising defender of human rights. On a personal note, I welcome this decision and wish to say that I am proud to preside over this Assembly.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.